

# ACHIEVEMENT PREPARATORY ACADEMY



A

WASHINGTON, D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
*Building a Foundation to Leave a Legacy*

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2012-2013

PROGRAM EVALUATION

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## **SCHOOL DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Mission Statement**

Achievement Prep Public Charter School's ("Achievement Prep") mission is to prepare students to excel as high-achieving scholars and leaders in high school, college and beyond. The mission is supported by the following beliefs upon which Achievement Prep is built:

Achievement Prep believes that:

- Literacy is the most essential academic skill upon which the majority of all future skill and knowledge acquisition is based.
- All students, regardless of race or socio-economic status, deserve a top quality, rigorous college-preparatory education.
- Closing the achievement gap in education is the "good fight" all schools must fight – and win.
- When provided with a highly structured, disciplined and supportive learning environment, and with quality, targeted instruction, all students will achieve to the highest academic standards.
- Frequent and continuous assessment is needed for a quality-learning environment.
- Its most important partnership is the partnership with its parents.

### **B. School Program**

#### **1. Curriculum Design and Instructional Approach**

In 2012-2013, Achievement Prep served 315 scholars in grades four through eight. Achievement Prep prepares students to excel as high-achieving scholars and leaders in high school, college and beyond, through a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum focused on the core academic areas of reading, writing, math, science and social studies/history. In order to fulfill its mission and ensure that Achievement Prep Scholars are fully equipped to compete academically with peers from the most rigorous college-preparatory programs in the nation, Achievement Prep has developed rigorous learning standards and chosen curricular materials that support scholars' success in these standards.

#### **Learning Standards**

The D.C. Standards provide the framework for Achievement Prep's content standards. Achievement Prep staff work strategically and relentlessly so that scholars master all of D.C.'s clear and rigorous academic standards. Where necessary to ensure scholars are fully prepared for demanding college-preparatory and local magnet high schools, Achievement Prep strengthens its curricula further, exceeding the D.C. standards in a manner that is grade-appropriate and simultaneously ensures the mastery of basic skills.

#### **Curriculum**

Achievement Prep's academic program rests upon a rigorous standards-based curriculum focused on English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies/history, and is designed to dramatically accelerate the learning of its scholars. To supplement its internally-created, standards-based curriculum, Achievement Prep uses curricular resources that have proven success in other excellent schools serving a similar population of students. All of the curricular resources are suitable for scholars with special needs, who are more advanced, or who are designated as English language

learners. A strong component of each curriculum chosen is that it supports teachers as they differentiate instruction.

### **English Language Arts**

Achievement Prep scholars currently take double periods of English language arts instruction daily. Achievement Prep's overall reading program is based on the five components of excellent reading outlined by the federal government: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

#### *Phonemic Awareness and Phonics*

Achievement Prep's English language arts classes currently incorporate materials from the Spellwell program. The materials address critical phonemic issues that many of Achievement Prep scholars face. Materials in this program include grade-appropriate words that follow a particular spelling rule or pattern. Sight words frequently used in writing are also included. In addition, each lesson allows space for words from scholars' classroom reading or writing.

Achievement Prep wants to ensure that each scholar is afforded the opportunity to build or rebuild the phonetic foundation on which all future learning depends - particularly as scholars move from sight recognition and familiar vocabulary to more complex words and types of words.

Achievement Prep uses flexibility grouping to differentiate instruction so that Achievement Prep meets the needs of those scholars who require phonics and phonemic awareness, and accelerate the instruction for those scholars who are higher skilled and do not require such remediation.

#### *Fluency*

In order to ensure that all Achievement Prep readers are fluent, Achievement Prep tested all scholars on fluency upon entry and prior to the start of the school year. For those scholars who demonstrated the need for fluency practice, Achievement Prep is using the Corrective Reading program. Written for scholars who have difficulty reading accurately and fluently, the Corrective Reading program provides a unique blend of teacher-directed instruction and high-frequency practice to accelerate fluency and decoding. This proven intervention program progresses from teaching letter sounds and blending to reading passages typical of textbook material. Detailed data on performance allows scholars to monitor their own improvement and experience success.

#### *Vocabulary*

Achievement Prep's mission of preparing children in grades 4-8 to become high achieving scholars and leaders in high school, college and beyond requires intense attention be paid to vocabulary development. In order to combat the 4<sup>th</sup> grade slump, English language arts classes at Achievement Prep use the systematic approach to vocabulary development that is presented through the Wordly Wise 3000 vocabulary materials.

In addition to the utilization of the Wordly Wise vocabulary materials, Achievement Prep adheres to the philosophy that vocabulary is best built through independent reading. Fifteen minutes of every day is dedicated to "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR). In addition, all scholars are expected and required to carry their independent reading book throughout the school day, and keep it at their desks in all classes. Scholars are also required to read their independent reading books for at least 20

minutes per night as part of their homework and complete a reading log documenting his/her reading for the evening.

### *Comprehension*

As scholars become more fluent readers, the focus of reading classes increasingly shifts to comprehension and textual analysis. Achievement Prep used the Making Connections and Wilson Reading programs to increase reading comprehension and analytical skills. In addition, scholars who are struggling with comprehension receive additional small group instruction geared at helping them to decipher text and increase comprehension.

### *Writing*

In addition to the five key components of strong reading instruction, Achievement Prep offers a rigorous writing curriculum that is designed to have scholars produce writing with excellent organization, elaboration, and flow in multiple genres. Achievement Prep has created its own internal writing standards that are rigorous and meant to ensure mastery and clarity of written expression. Because the best way to improve one's writing is by writing, scholars write every day in class and at home. Scholars are learning step-by-step how to create strong sentences, paragraphs, and papers using templates and teacher modeling until they are confident enough to tackle the task without scaffolding.

## **Social Studies/History**

Achievement Prep's goal is to instill in scholars the historical skills and knowledge necessary for them to become lifelong students of history. The social studies/history curriculum is presented in a way that is engaging and challenging. Teachers expect scholars to master the key concepts and vocabulary, and also teach scholars to analyze primary sources, debate different points of view, and make cause-and-effect connections. Achievement Prep's social studies curriculum makes explicit connections to reading instruction skills taught in other subjects. Social studies class is a fast-paced, multi-modal class in which scholars hone their non-fiction reading skills, learn important content, and apply it in written essays and oral presentations. The TimeLinks curriculum provides readable, accessible content that aligns with state standards and easy-to-use multiple resources such as leveled readers to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.

## **Mathematics**

Achievement Prep scholars have double periods of math to ensure a solid foundation of skills and concepts and prepare for an accelerated high school mathematics curriculum. The mathematics courses have a dual focus: procedures (computation) and problem solving (application). The procedures class instills and reinforces basic math skills, rules, and operations that many scholars lack and infuses new concepts and skills. Problem solving teaches scholars how to apply this procedural knowledge to complex, multi-step problems—often with “real world” significance. The distinction between procedures and problem solving is clear - one provides the concepts and skills while the other provides problem-solving applications. Achievement Prep seventh grade scholars take pre-algebra, and all 8<sup>th</sup> graders take Algebra I.

## **Science**

The goal of Achievement Prep's science curriculum is to develop scientific literacy and the skills necessary to design and carry out science investigations. Achievement Prep's science curriculum provides a rigorous scientific background. The science course tackles science related text, while also exposing the scholars to hands-on experiments to increase their engagement and understanding of the subject. A large emphasis is placed on the learning strategy of questioning throughout the science course and scholars are encouraged to complete research and build models to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts addressed in the course.

### **Inclusive and Suitable Curriculum for All Scholars**

Achievement Prep's curriculum was developed to ensure that every scholar, regardless of learning style, level of proficiency, English language learner or special education status, can participate fully and thrive academically. Achievement Prep selected curricula resources that can be extended and adapted for use with scholars who need intense remediation, English language learners, scholars with disabilities, and more advanced scholars. Achievement Prep's schedule of frequent assessments helps to identify those scholars who have achieved mastery and require more challenging work, as well as those scholars who are struggling with a skill/content area and need additional support or an alternate way to master a skill/content area. Achievement Prep's use of flexible ability grouping allows appropriate curricular adjustment by teachers to meet scholars' needs. Achievement Prep is working to ensure that all of its scholars, regardless of their learning needs, are prepared to achieve academic success.

## **2. Parental Involvement at Achievement Prep – Parents as Partners**

Achievement Prep believes that it has a responsibility to empower parents to have a voice in their child's education. Achievement Prep believes that when families become involved, students, schools, and communities all benefit because strong home-school partnerships help all stakeholders focus on the real issue of high student achievement. Achievement Prep views parents as partners – believing that students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students. Families are asked to sign the Achievement Prep Covenant each year that includes an agreement asking families to, among other things, 1) create an environment at home that is conducive to completing homework nightly, 2) communicate with teachers and staff regularly, 3) attend parent teacher conferences and other school sponsored family events, 4) ensure their scholar attends school regularly and promptly.

Achievement Prep sponsors a monthly Family Night on the fourth Thursday of every month, where we welcome families into the school for food, activities and community building. We also do not send or mail report cards home. Families are required to come into the school and meet with teachers at least four times per year to discuss their child's academic progress. We use these conferences as opportunities to build support and to strengthen the partnership between family and school.

# SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

## A. Performance and Progress

### 1. Meeting the Mission

Achievement Prep is meeting its mission to prepare students to excel as high-achieving scholars and leaders in high school, college and beyond. Achievement prep scholars continue to be among the highest performing scholars in the District of Columbia. Our first two classes of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have been promoted and accepted into selective and highly competitive high schools in Washington, DC, as well as prestigious private and boarding schools. Our alumni support staff maintain contact with Achievement Prep alumni, offering support, counsel and encouragement, to ensure that they will continue to excel, in high school, college and beyond.

### Key Mission-Related Programs

Achievement Prep is able to meet its mission, through the following mission-related programs.

#### ➤ **Be the Dream – Character and Leadership Program**

Integral to Achievement Prep's mission is the notion set forth by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - "strong mind and tender heart" - the idea that a complete education includes the development of intellectual competence as well as the nurturing of fine character. An emphasis on Achievement Prep's **DREAM** (**D**etermination, **R**espect, **E**nthusiasm, **A**ccountability and **M**astery) **values** is integrated into the academic courses and throughout the school culture. The goal is for Achievement Prep scholars to not merely do "well," but also to do "good."

#### ➤ **Extended School Day and School Year**

All Achievement Prep scholars participate in an extended year and school day program. Scholars attended school for 195 days in the academic year. This is longer than the traditional school year of 180 days in DC Public Schools. An extended school year allows additional time for teachers to maximize instruction and student learning, provide targeted support, and accelerate learning. In addition to the 195 days of instruction, Achievement Prep also required certain students (approximately 45% of Achievement Prep student body) to attend Saturday Academy an additional 20 Saturdays out of the year from 9:00 – 12:00 pm. The focus of Saturday Academy was targeted math and reading instruction and support.

In addition to a longer academic year, Achievement Prep scholars have a longer academic day. Scholars attended school from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Achievement Prep scholars are provided with two hours more of instructional time each day than the traditional public schools. The extended academic day allows more in depth and rigorous instruction time in core academic subjects. Built into the academic day schedule are opportunities for targeted student support and enrichment activities.

### Other Key Program Features

- *Strong school culture.* A strong school culture is conducive to high student achievement. Achievement Prep works strategically and relentlessly to create a culture of high achievement and celebration. Achievement Prep has established a positive, caring, tough-love atmosphere where scholars feel safe and successful socially, emotionally and academically. Through programs such

as the DREAM Dollars (weekly scholar paychecks of imaginary funds), Preppie and Proud (Achievement Prep’s weekly community celebration), daily Community Close Outs, and Morning Meetings, Achievement Prep has created an environment where scholars and staff alike embrace the concept of team and family and celebrating and rewarding appropriate behaviors.

- *Professional Development.* At Achievement Prep, we believe that teaching matters – greatly. Since primarily two factors drive student achievement – what is taught and how it is taught – Achievement Prep believes that it is vital to invest in all its teaching professionals so that they can become great, master teachers.

In 2012-2013, the school provided high quality professional development prior to the start of school with a 4-week Summer Institute, and during the school year through 2.5 hours weekly professional development sessions, 8 full-day professional development days, weekly observations and 30-minute individual meetings, to build instructional skills, knowledge and strategies.

## 2. Meeting the Goals and Academic Achievement Expectations in Charter

During the 2012-2013 school year, Achievement Prep underwent its fifth year review by the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB). In its review, the PCSB noted that Achievement Prep PCS identified eighteen goals in its original charter application. Of those eighteen goals, the PCSB included fifteen goals in its analysis, and noted that Achievement Prep had pursued and collected data for ten goals. Of the ten goals pursued, Achievement Prep PCS has met nine of these goals. The chart below summarizes these determinations, which are detailed further in the body of the Fifth Year Review report.

	Goal or Expectation	Met?
1	Students master content in reading and demonstrate proficiency as readers of the English language.	Yes
2	Students master content in writing and demonstrate grade level proficiency or higher and progress one year or more every year in writing.	Yes
3	Students master content in math and demonstrate increased academic achievement in mathematics annually in tested areas.	Yes
4	Students demonstrate grade level proficiency or higher, and progress one year or more every year in science.	Yes
5	Students will demonstrate an increase in achievement scores in reading on the Woodcock Johnson III assessment for special education	Goal Not Pursued <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Achievement Prep PCS never administered the Woodcock Johnson III assessment.



students.

6	Students will demonstrate an increase in achievement scores in mathematics on the Woodcock Johnson III assessment for special education students.	Goal Not Pursued
7	Students demonstrate high levels of attendance and homework completion.	Yes <i>Pending verification on the homework component</i>
8	Students consistently demonstrate the DREAM values (Determination, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Mastery) in their actions and interactions within the school community.	Yes
9	Maintain annual out of school suspensions less than 5%.	No
10	Parents/families actively engage in their child's learning and support the mission of the school.	Yes
11	Parents/families demonstrate high satisfaction with the academic program and the clear and open communication of Achievement Prep.	Insufficient Evidence <sup>2</sup>
12	The community will demonstrate overall satisfaction with Achievement Prep.	Insufficient Evidence
13	The faculty and staff will demonstrate overall satisfaction with Achievement Prep.	Insufficient Evidence
14	Achievement Prep PCS will demonstrate effective systems of home/school communication.	Yes <i>Pending verification</i>
15	Achievement Prep PCS will demonstrate full enrollment and strong student retention.	Yes

For each goal that is identified as either not pursued or for which there is insufficient evidence, PCSB staff recommended that Achievement Prep PCS either a) amend its charter to remove the goals or b) begin collecting and annually reporting data on the progress towards meeting these goals.

<sup>2</sup> PCSB did not have sufficient documentation on record to make a determination whether the school met this goal.

Achievement Prep amended its charter in 2013 to replace its accountability plan goals with the academic and non-academic achievement measures included in the PCSB's Performance Management Framework.

The PCSB granted Achievement Prep charter continuance based on its first five years of performance.

## Student Achievement

### DC CAS

In its fifth year of operation, Achievement Prep scholars continued to be among the highest performing students in the District of Columbia. On the 2013 DC CAS, Achievement Prep scholars demonstrated 64% proficiency or advanced in reading, and 85% proficiency or advanced in math. Scholar scores dropped slightly from 2012. This is consistent with national assessment trends in which schools show a slight dip in scores after a previous year of substantial gain. Our scholars' performance was still double digits higher than the citywide average. Yet, in keeping with our mantra, "Good is not good enough; great is good enough," the entire Achievement Prep community is ever vigilant about advancing scholar achievement in all areas. We will not measure our performance against mediocre norms, but by our own standards of excellence for all students.

	Achievement Prep 2011 % prof or advcd	Achievement Prep 2012 % prof or adv	Achievement Prep 2013 % prof or adv	District Average 2012	% by which Achievement Prep exceeds District Average
<b>Reading</b>	<b>60.00%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>64%</b>	50%	14%
<b>Math</b>	<b>87.02%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>85%</b>	53%	32%

## B. Lessons Learned and Actions Taken

Each year, there are substantial number of scholars entering the schools in grades four and five who are significantly below grade level in reading. During the 2012-2013 school year, instructional leaders realized that the reading intervention resources in place were insufficient to comprehensively address these reading deficits. For the 2013-2014 school year, there are now two full-time reading specialists on staff, and all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and all Special education teachers were trained this summer in Achievement Prep's reading intervention program. Now, all instructors who engage with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars are prepared and coordinated to advance their reading skills.

## C. Unique Accomplishments

- In 2012, Achievement Prep was ranked as a Tier 1 top-performing public charter school by the DC Public Charter School Board, scoring 86% on the PCSB's Performance Management Framework.
- In 2013, Founder and Head of School, Shantelle Wright, was honored by the Accelerate Institute with the prestigious Ryan Award for her leadership in driving Achievement Prep scholars' exceptional academic gains.

- The DC Public Charter School Board granted Achievement Prep approval to continue operating an additional five years, after the board acknowledged the school's outstanding quality, performance and service to families in SE, Washington, DC.
- The DC Public Charter School Board approved Achievement Prep's request to amend its charter, to add a new elementary campus, which will serve 260 scholars in grades K-3.

## DATA COMPONENT

Source      Data Point

GENERAL INFORMATION		
School	LEA Name	Achievement Preparatory Academy PCS
School	Campus Name	Achievement Prep Public Charter School
School	Ages served – adult schools only	N/A
PCSB	Audited Enrollment Total	315
PCSB	PK3 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	PK4 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	KG Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 1 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 2 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 3 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 4 Audited Enrollment	96
PCSB	Grade 5 Audited Enrollment	74
PCSB	Grade 6 Audited Enrollment	93
PCSB	Grade 7 Audited Enrollment	34
PCSB	Grade 8 Audited Enrollment	18
PCSB	Grade 9 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 10 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 11 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Grade 12 Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Adult Audited Enrollment	
PCSB	Ungraded Audited Enrollment	

STUDENT DATA POINTS		
School	Total number of instructional days	195
School	Notes on number of instructional days for grades with different calendars	N/A
PCSB	Suspension Rate	35.2%
PCSB	Expulsion Rate	0.6%
PCSB	Instructional Time Lost to Discipline	0.6%
PCSB	Promotion Rate (All Grades)	88.9%
PCSB	Promotion Rate (KG and higher)	88.9%
PCSB	Mid-Year Withdrawal Rate	5.7%

PCSB	Mid-Year Entry Rate	0.6%
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FACULTY AND STAFF DATA POINTS		
School	Number of Teachers	27
School	Teacher Attrition Rate	37.0%

FACILITIES INFORMATION		
School	Square footage for entire classroom space	7,200 sq ft
School	Square footage for entire building	54,800 sq ft
School	Cafeteria	Yes
School	Theater/Performing Arts Space	Yes
School	Art Room	No
School	Library	No
School	Music Room	No
School	Playground	No
School	Gym	No

EDUCATION OFFERINGS		
School	Advanced Placement	No
School	Alternative	No
School	Arts Integration/Infused	No
School	Career/Technical	No
School	Classical Education School	No
School	College Prep	Yes
School	Expeditionary Learning	No
School	Evening	No
School	Extended Academic Time	Yes
School	GED	No
School	International Baccalaureate	No
School	Language Immersion	No
School	Math, Science, Technology	No
School	Montessori	No
School	Online/Blended	No
School	Public Policy/Law	No
School	Reggio Emilia	No
School	Residential Program	No
School	Special Education Focus	No
School	Stand-Alone Preschool	No
School	World Cultures	No
School	Please feel free to provide a written explanation to some or all of your answers to the multiple choice questions in	0

**the below text box.**

## **APPENDIX**

### Staff Roster

**Achievement Prep Public Charter School**  
**STAFF ROSTER**  
**2012-2013**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Emily Adams	7th/8th Grade History Teacher
Peter Anderson	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher
John Autin	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher
Susan Cannon	Chief Academic Officer
Gregory Cooke	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher
Jacqueline Christy	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher
Charlene Cummings	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher
Lauren DiMartino	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade History Teacher
Ericka Franklin	5 <sup>th</sup> grade Math Teacher
Tanya Griffith	Operations Manager
Jackie Hanley	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher
Alexis Harris	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher
Kristin Irvin	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade History Teacher
Erica Isaac	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade History Teacher
Ambyr Kinne	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher
Laura Lane-Steele	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher
Ariel Lawrence	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher
Janice Lewis	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher
Korey Morris	Director of High School Placement and Alumni Support
Heather Nelson	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Spanish Teacher
Carmen Player	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade History Teacher
Kelly Quinn	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher
Michael Rabin	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade History Teacher
Alyssa Roark	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher
Jonathan Robertson	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher
Laura Saenger	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher
Justine Sinprasith	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher